

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY LAGOS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2018

INFO DIA WASHDC

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL IBADAN

AMCONSUL KADUNA

S E C R E T LAGOS 1238

NOFORN

E.O. 11652: NGDS

TAGS: PINS, PINT, MORG, NI

SUBJECT: FMG BEGINS TO IMPLEMENT DEMOBILIZATION PLANS FOR
NIGERIAN ARMED FORCES

SUMMARY: FMG HAS BEGUN IMPLEMENTATION OF ARMED FORCES
"DEMOBILIZATION" PLANS HINTED AT IN PREVIOUS WEEKS BY SENIOR
MILITARY OFFICERS. PLANS, HOWEVER, CALL FOR HOUSECLEANING
OF "DEADWOOD" IN SERVICES RATHER THAN DEMOBILIZATION OF SPECIFIC
NUMBER OF OFFICERS AND TROOPS FOR BUDGETARY OR OTHER ADMINISTRA-
TIVE REASONS. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF, IN CONVERSATION WITH SENSITIVE SOURCE, HAS LEARNED
FMG IN PROCESS IMPLEMENTING DEMOBILIZATION PLANS FOR ARMED
FORCES. DEMOBILIZATION DOES NOT MEAN FMG HAS DECIDED CUT ARMED
FORCES BY SPECIFIC NUMBER OF OFFICERS AND TROOPS. APPEARS,
RATHER, TO BE CLEANSING EXERCISE WITH PRINCIPAL CRITERIA FOR
DISCHARGES BEING OLD AGE, HEALTH, AND BAD CONDUCT (CORRUPTION,
EXCESSIVE ABSENTEEISM, ETC.) FMG WILL ALSO DISCHARGE ALL
EX-SERVICEMEN WHO MOBILIZED DURING BIAFRAN CONFLICT.

2. NAVY IS FIRST SERVICE TO FEEL CUTS. ACCORDING TO SOURCE,

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MORE THAN 20 OFFICERS ALREADY DISCHARGED, WITH HIGHEST RANK
BEING LIEUTENANT COMMANDER. ARMED FORCES SUPREME HEADQUARTERS

NOW IN PROCESS DRAWING UP DISCHARGE LIST FOR ARMY. NO START MADE AS YET ON AIR FORCE LIST. INTENTION OF FMG IS TO COMPLETE DEMOBILIZATION OF UNDESIRABLE OFFICERS BEFORE STARTING ON ENLISTED RANK.

3. DEMOBILIZATION PLANS APPEAR TO BE COLLECTIVE DECISION BY SUPREME MILITARY COUNCIL (SMC) RATHER THAN PROGRAM BEING PUSHED BY ANY PARTICULAR SENIOR OFFICERS. INTENTION IS TO CARRY OUT DISCHARGES WITH MINIMUM OF PUBLICITY. THERE WILL BE NO APPEALS AGAINST FMG DECISIONS. THOSE DISCHARGED FOR HEALTH OR AGE WILL RECEIVE FULL BENEFITS PLUS REHABILITATION, IF DESIRED, IN FORM OF RETRAINING FOR CIVILIAN JOBS. THOSE DISCHARGED FOR BAD CONDUCT WILL GET NO BENEFITS. A NEW BENEFIT PLAN HAS BEEN DRAWN UP SPECIFICALLY FOR THESE DISCHARGES.

4. ACCORDING TO SOURCE, THERE IS GOOD DEAL OF DISCONTENT AMONG THOSE IN LINE TO BE DISCHARGED OR WHO FEAR THEY WILL BE ON THE LIST. THEY, HOWEVER, REALIZE FURTHER ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES POSSIBLE SHOULD THEY MAKE ISSUE OF FMG DECISION. IN SOURCE OPINION, THOSE GIVEN BAD CONDUCT DISCHARGES LUCKY, IN ANY CASE, TO GET OFF WITH JUST THAT. PERHAPS MOST JUSTIFIABLE UNHAPPINESS IS AMONG THOSE WHO DISCHARGED SHORT OF 15 YEAR SERVICE, WHICH MEANS THEY WILL GET ABBREVIATED PENSIONS ALTHOUGH RECEIVING FULL DISCHARGE BENEFITS.

5. COMMENT: EMBASSY UNABLE DISCERN AT THIS STAGE WHETHER HOUSECLEANING WILL CREATE SIZEABLE NUMBER DISGRUNTLED EX-SERVICE-MEN. TEND TO BELIEVE SOURCE STATEMENT ON BAD CONDUCT DISCHARGES PROBABLY RIGHT. ALSO PROBABLY OTHER DISCHARGEES NOT LIKELY TO PROTEST TOO LOUDLY FOR FEAR LOSING WHAT BENEFITS FMG HAS ALREADY DECIDED TO GIVE THEM. THE ACTION DOES, HOWEVER, MOVE FMG'S CLEANUP CAMPAIGN INTO ARMED FORCES AND WOULD APPEAR BEAR OUT BRIGADIER OBASANJO'S STATEMENT TO PRESS LAST OCTOBER 26 THAT ARMED FORCES WOULD DISCIPLINE THEIR OWN WITHOUT PUBLICITY (LAGOS 10695). ALSO, OF COURSE, THIS MOVE WILL ADD TO SWELLING GROUPS EX-CIVIL SERVANTS WHO HAVE BEEN LET GO BY THE NEW FMG. EASUM

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